

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to change)

Dancing for the Screen – A Century of Moving Dance Images

FFAR 398W2/A– Winter 2007 (3 credits)

Philip Szporer

Monday 13:00-15:15 P.M. – EV 1.1605

Office Hours: by appointment (VA 222)

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The course focuses on key historical developments and issues in the field of dance and the camera. Classes cover a broad range of topics, performers and time periods. Using a combination of lectures, readings and screenings, the course gives new insight into how dance creatively exploits the art and craft of film and video.

Course text: There is one required text for this course, *Envisioning Dance on Video and Video*, ed. Judy Mitoma (Routledge, 2002) – the soft-cover edition.

The reading load is not burdensome, but please read critically.

Periodically, a short article may supplement the course text, if relevant. Please feel free to share your intellectual discoveries.

>Week 1 - Sept 10

Introduction: Review syllabus, explain readings

Early film and the dancing and moving body:

Méliès, Lumière, Edison, Loie Fuller, Mistinguett, Valentino, Chaplin, DW Griffith (featuring St. Denis)

Readings:

Timeline: A Century of Dance and Media (Brooks), pg xix

Chapter 8: From Méliès to Streaming Video: A Century of ...

Chapter 9: Ted Shawn's Moving Images

Chapter 10: Doris Humphrey's Dance for the G String

>Week 2 – Sept 17

Busby Berkeley, Fred Astaire, Nicholas Brothers, Josephine Baker

Reading:

Chapter 11: Optic Nerve: Busby Berkeley and the American Cinema

Chapter 12: Dancin' in the Rain: Gene Kelly's Musical Films

>Week 3 - Sept 24

Gene Kelly, Jack Cole, Ann Miller, George Balanchine, Michael Powell

Readings:

Chapter 4: The Master and the Movies

Chapter 12: Dancin' in the Rain: Gene Kelly's Musical Films

RESPONSE ESSAY #1 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

>Week 4 - October 1

Disney Dances, Bob Fosse, Jerome Robbins

October 8 - Thanksgiving - no class

>Week 5 - October 15

Norman McLaren, Philippe Baylaucq

Guest: Vincent Warren

Reading:

Chapter 30: Northern Exposures

>Week 6 - October 22

Canadian Perspectives:

Laura Taler, Nick de Pencier, Édouard Lock, Allen Kaeja, Mark Adam

Guest: Mark Adam

Readings:

Chapter 30: Northern Exposures

Chapter 40: Dancing with the Camera: The Dance Choreographer

RESPONSE ESSAY #2 DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

>Week 7 - October 29

Merce Cunningham, Bill T Jones

Guest: Chris Salter, Hexagram, TBC

Readings:

Chapter 5: Merce Cunningham's Choreography for the Camera

Chapter 17: Dancing and Cameras

Chapter 18: Frequently Asked Questions

>Week 8 - November 5

Dance documentaries

Readings:

Chapter 35: Watching Dance with a Remote in Your Hand

Chapter 36: Editing Dancemaker

Chapter 46: The Camera as Choreographer in Documentary and Ethnographic

Chapter 50: When My Hair was Brown: The Making of a Dance Doc

>Week 9 - November 12

Dance for the Camera: Maya Deren, Hillary Harris, Amy Greenfield, Meredith Monk, Pooh Kaye, Ed Emshwiller, Kenneth Anger, Victoria Marks/Margaret Williams

Readings:

Chapter 3; The Kinesthetics of Avant-Garde Dance Film: Deren and Harris

Chapter 15: Wearing Three Hats: Process Notes from a Polymath

Chapter 38: Portraits in Celluloid

Chapter 39: Making Dance Films with Victoria Marks

>Week 10 - November 19

International Perspectives: DV8, Vanderkeybus, De Mey

Readings:

Chapter 28: A New Place for Dancing

Chapter 29: Europeans Filming New Narrative Dance

CLIP ANALYSIS DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

>Week 11 - November 26

Creating Dance for the Screen

Guest: TBA

Readings:

Chapter 37: Accompanying Choreography

Chapter 41: The Right Place at the Right Time: The Invisible Art of Editing

>Week 12 - December 3

Expanded Perspectives: Bollywood, music videos, Carlos Saura, Stomp the Yard

Readings:

Chapter 2: Music Video as Short Form Dance Film

Chapter 33: The Musical Formula: Song & Dance in Popular Indian Cinema

FINAL ESSAY DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS**GRADING:****1 - quiz (1) - 20%** (20 points)

A short answer in-class quiz based on class lectures, discussion, readings, media examples, and discussions.

2 - two response papers - 20% (each short essay is worth 10 points)

Response essays are based on two selected chapters/videos from the assigned text/DVD that we will cover in class. There are several types of response: You need to ask at least one question about the reading. This can be either a point that you're confused about or one that you'd like cleared up; it can be an objection you see to an argument in the readings; a query about how something said in the reading relates to something else; a critical response; or anything else. Typed, doubled-spaced (with a reasonable font size). **500 words** each.

3 - clip analysis (1) - 20% (20 points)

Write a two-page, double-spaced (with reasonable font size), sentence-outline-format textual analysis in response to these two questions:

1. What kinds of general information (regarding setting, dramatic structure, texture, and thematic meaning) are provided?
2. What cinematic techniques (regarding color/light, sound, cinematography, editing, characterization, blocking, etc.) convey meaning in the clip, and to what effect?

4 - final essay - 30% (30 points)

Topic: Discuss the collaboration between one specific dance artist and filmmaker

The essay may be written in French or English. All papers (length: 7 pages) must be typed, double-spaced, (with a reasonable font size), paginated, and include your name, a title, as well as proper citations/references, bibliography, filmography, videography, etc. . . .

Grades are based on clarity of expression, observational, descriptive, and analytic skills, research methods, references, footnotes and bibliography.

4- attendance and participation - 10%

Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of every class. Students will be expected to participate actively in class discussions. If you miss one class, your attendance/participation mark will automatically decrease 5%, two absences 10%. Exception: if you have a justified absence (severe illness, death in the family). Repeated lateness may jeopardize a student's ability to pass. Attendance/participation grades are based on preparedness for class, willingness to engage in class discussions and listening attentively. Blog entries (through the Moodle site) will also be considered.

Summary of Criteria of Evaluation:

1. Response Papers (2): 20% (each are worth 10 points)
2. Quiz (1): 20%
3. Clip Analysis (1): 20%
3. Final Essay (due Dec 3): 30%
4. Participation/Attendance: 10%

To receive the best grade, your writing must be error-free and well structured. **Plagiarized work will result in a failed grade.**

LATE WORK IS NOT ENCOURAGED. If you have a valid reason for postponing assignment submissions, such as a death in the family or a serious illness, please contact me and we'll arrange a reasonable alternative. Otherwise, a grade will be deducted for each day the paper is late (i.e, 'B' to 'B-').